

Showalter Cabin

CT-1302

2144 Cedar Road, Scientists' Cliffs, Port Republic (Calvert County)

1946, private access

The Showalter Cabin, located within the Scientists Cliffs subdivision near Port Republic, Maryland and constructed in 1946, is a one story, rustic log cabin set within Scientists' Cliffs, a mid-twentieth century residential subdivision bordering on the Chesapeake Bay in Calvert County. The Showalter Cabin has an expansive view. The community of Scientists' Cliffs serves as an example of a twentieth century residential subdivision of vacation homes, with important landscape features. In addition, the Showalter Cabin is associated with the Showalter family, who played an important role in the construction of Scientists' Cliffs.

7. Description

Inventory No. CT-1302

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Showalter Cabin, located within the Scientist's Cliffs subdivision near Port Republic, Maryland, was constructed in 1946, according to the current owner. The cabin is set within Scientists' Cliffs, a mid-twentieth century residential subdivision bordering the Chesapeake Bay in Calvert County, Maryland. The cabin is set into a gently sloping hillside which provides expansive views of the Bay.

The Showalter Cabin is a one story rustic wood frame cabin, three bays wide and five bays long, with a basement, concrete foundation and a gable roof. The cabin is clad with its original horizontal log construction with corner notching.

The building's primary or eastern façade has an end gable with an overhang above the basement level. The first story has vertical wood siding and a band of three pairs of replacement sliding glass doors to the north and a small, double paned, sliding glass window to the south. The first story overhangs the basement level and is supported by a centrally located rusticated wood post with a small brace. Just to the north of center on the basement level is a three panel wood door with single fixed pane which is flanked on the north by a pair of one over one wood sash double hung windows and on the south by a two pairs of the same window type.

Along the south elevation, an opening containing a wood door with a four light window and wood-framed screen door is located in the second bay from the east, which is flanked by two windows in the adjoining bays; a pair of hinged windows with six lights each to the east and a single hinged, six light window in the bay to the west. A hinged two light window is placed to the west on the south elevation. On the basement level, there is a pair of hinged windows with six lights each close to the east side and a pair of hinged two light windows, oriented horizontally towards the western end of the foundation wall.

The west elevation has five window openings arranged symmetrically. Three six paned square wood sash windows are set in the center of the elevation, beneath the gable peak. A pair of one over one wood sash windows is located below the square windows toward the north and south ends.

The north elevation has a wood walkway with wood railings and posts that lead to a centrally located entrance opening that has a wood door with nine fixed lights. The door is flanked to the west by a single one over one wood sash window and to the east by a pair of windows of the same type. A pair of windows of the same type is located directly below on the basement level. Immediately to the east of the door is a projecting fieldstone chimney that pierces and rises above the roofline.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates 1946 **Architect/Builder** Joseph Showalter

Construction dates 1946

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register ☐ Maryland Register ☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Showalter Cabin is set within Scientists' Cliffs, a community which serves as an example of a progressive, twentieth century, residential subdivision with important landscape features. In addition, the Showalter Cabin is associated with the Showalter family, who played an important role in the construction of Scientists' Cliffs.

The Showalter Cabin was built in 1946 by Joseph Showalter, who also constructed other cabins at Scientists' Cliffs. Mr. and Mrs. Showalter were the first year round residents at Scientists' Cliffs and have lived in the cabin continuously. Their two children were the first youths who lived all their years here prior to entrance to college. Mr. Showalter played a role in Scientists' Cliffs, working first under Mr. Harold Matteson, who built many homes and ran the local sawmill, and later as a builder and design advisor, where he supervised construction of 39 cabins in Scientists' Cliffs. Mr. Showalter, trained as a plant pathologist, also started a nursery in the community and worked in creating other planting areas. In addition, Mr. Showalter has served with the Calvert County Historic District Commission since 1981 and has served as chairman. He has served two terms on the Commission for Aging and 25 years on the Calvert County Hospital Board and Calvert County Nursing Center Board. He has participated in the National Institute of Health Study on Aging since 1962, and served as Chairman of the Scientists' Cliffs Association Board in 1972 and 1973. Ruth Showalter taught school in a 2-room schoolhouse in Broome's Island for two years, from 1946 to 1948. She later served as a first grade teacher for 13 years in Prince Frederick, and served as Vice Principal at Fairview Elementary School and Assistant Principal at Mt. Harmony. She has volunteered at the Hospital Auxiliary, at the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, and the Calvert Marine Museum, and served two terms on the Library Board as well as participating in Scientists' Cliffs activities.

Scientists' Cliffs was founded in 1935 by George "Flippo" Gravatt and his wife, Annie Evelyn Rathburn, who were both forest pathologists at the Department of Agriculture. Flippo Gravatt was familiar with the area due to his extensive studies of a collection of nearby blighted American Chestnut trees. Starting with an initial allocation of 238 acres in 1935 (purchased from Marmaduke White of Baltimore), the Gravatts acquired more that 750 acres by 1961. The original purchase area includes portions of the Scientists' Cliffs community known as Gates B and C.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Continuation Sheet

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Flippo Gravatt founded Scientists' Cliffs with the intention of creating an affordable vacation and residential community that would also promote the protection of the natural environment and advancement of science. In the fall of 1935, Flippo Gravatt hosted a picnic for his fellow plant scientists at the Department of Agriculture. At the site of the future subdivision, Gravatt announced the formation of an exclusive community of scientists and their families. Gravatt and Rathburn built the first house on the site in the spring of 1936, known as "Chestnut Cabin" (which now serves as a community center), out of blight-killed chestnut trees. Following the construction of the Chestnut Cabin, Gravatt constructed five small cabins for the use of day and weekend guests, many of whom were "sold" on the community and became eventual members and owners. The Scientists' Cliffs Association was officially incorporated in 1937 with the mission of promoting interest in the natural sciences, maintaining a library and fossil museum, protecting natural areas, and organizing scientific lectures and field trips. The fossils at Scientists' Cliffs also served as a research interest, and many of the fossils have been incorporated into the fireplaces of homes throughout the community. The Scientists' Cliffs Association initially included restrictive bylaws in which all members (property owners) were required to be scientists. This bylaw was later relaxed to include those with college degrees, and then to include those without formal college education but who had demonstrated professional distinction. The community was popular as a summer family vacation area, and has gained an increasing number of year-round residents. The Scientists' Cliffs community now includes over 200 residences.

Horticulture was a central focus in the landscape design of Scientists' Cliffs. In addition to maintaining undeveloped woodlands, this activity consisted of planting filberts, bamboo, figs, blight-resistant hybrid Chinese chestnuts, grapes, and fruit trees. Additionally, over 70 varieties of azaleas were planted at the site. The community itself was founded as a result of Flippo Gravatt's interest in horticultural pathology, and the blighted trees on site were used to construct some of the earliest buildings. Landscape architecture is an important historic theme at Scientists' Cliffs – which is evident in both the master planning and siting of houses within the existing natural setting – as well as in the highly unusual variety of horticultural elements.

Cabins and houses were not only set within an existing natural setting, but were also built from logs cut and milled at an onsite mill. "The decision was for log construction. A sawmill that produced logs was installed. The first few cabins were built of blight-killed chestnut. Subsequent cabins were built of tulip poplar or pine logs. In the mid-fifties log construction gave way to wood siding." Flippo Gravatt brought Harold Matteson to Scientists' Cliffs to run the sawmill and provide construction services. Matteson's father also built furniture and interior cabinets for many of the early homes. Bert Miles also built several early homes. Dickey Wallace undertook the construction of unique sandstone fireplaces for several early

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homes. Gravatt also brought Joseph Showalter, who had served as a plant pathologist at Virginia Polytechnic, to build homes and to run the nursery, which included over 70 varieties of azaleas.¹

Scientists' Cliffs served as an early attempt to create a residential community that operated on a sustainable ecological philosophy. Such an ecological philosophy was distinctly different from large-scale "tract" residential subdivisions common to the early and mid twentieth century – however, the notions of social progress expressed by the founders and residents of Scientists' Cliffs were part of an important trend of Progressivism, a broad social movement that sought alternative strategies for urban communities that was particularly active during the 1930s. This Progressive notion has been maintained by an active community organization at Scientists' Cliffs. A contemporary local history notes that "the original effort, maintained throughout the years, was to create a very different sort of community, one that would be as simple and inexpensive as possible, a place where people of comparable means and similar tastes might relax beside the Bay."²

The Scientists' Cliffs community was affected by World War II, as fuel for the long motor trips from Washington DC was rationed, and many owners rented cabins to nearby servicemen. After World War II, Scientists' Cliffs Road, leading to the community from Route 4, which was a narrow, dirt and gravel unfinished roadway, was widened and improved. Scientists' Cliffs reflected the important and transformative role played by automotive transportation in the development of residential and vacation communities.³

Flippo Gravatt worked closely with the early builders and contractors in the construction and development of Scientists' Cliffs. The development features common spaces (including the Chestnut Cabin, as well as a later swimming pool addition to replace a swimming hole), an ecological natural style (slightly different from the more deliberate picturesque movement) and a cohesive building type. In addition, information regarding Flippo Gravatt, who served as founder and developer, as well as the social goals of the founding community, allows Scientists' Cliffs to be considered as an important site in the suburban development of the United States.

¹ "A Dream Realized," 3.

² Ibid, 3.

³ Gloria Schultz Leppi, "The Rope Swings and Other Early Memories of Scientists' Cliffs," n.d., 1, 4.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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"A Dream Realized: A History of the Scientists' Cliffs Association 1937-1987" unpublished.

Ames, David L. *Context and Guidelines for Evaluating America's Historic Suburbs for the National Register of Historic Places*. Draft. 1996. .

Chase, Susan, David Ames and Rebecca Siders 1992 *Suburbanization in the Vicinity of Wilmington, Delaware, 1880-1950+/-*. Newark, DE: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware.

Gloria Schultz Leppi "The Rope Swings and Other Early Memories of Scientists' Cliffs" n.d.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property approx .5

Acreage of historical setting approx .5

Quadrangle name Price Frederick

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the surveyed property is marked as Tax Map 28A, Parcel 21 and ½ of 20. The existing Parcel is concurrent with the historic setting, and includes character-defining resources and setting that relate to the property's construction and evolution.

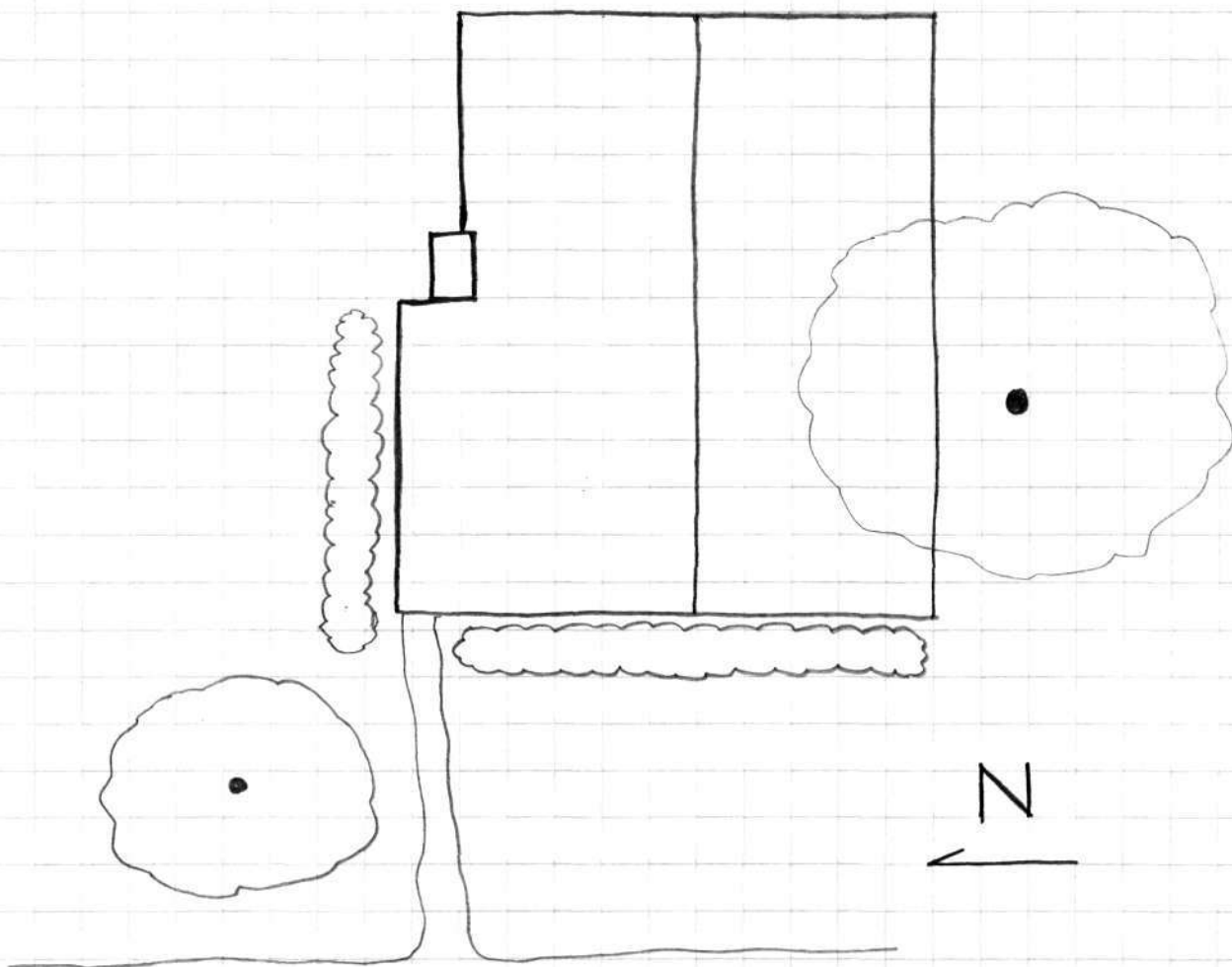
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Caleb Christopher, Architectural Historian , revised by Craig Tuminaro, Architectural Historian		
organization	URS Corporation	date	3.1.03, 5.11.04
street & number	200 Orchard Ridge Drive, Suite 101	telephone	301.258.5897
city or town	Gaithersburg	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

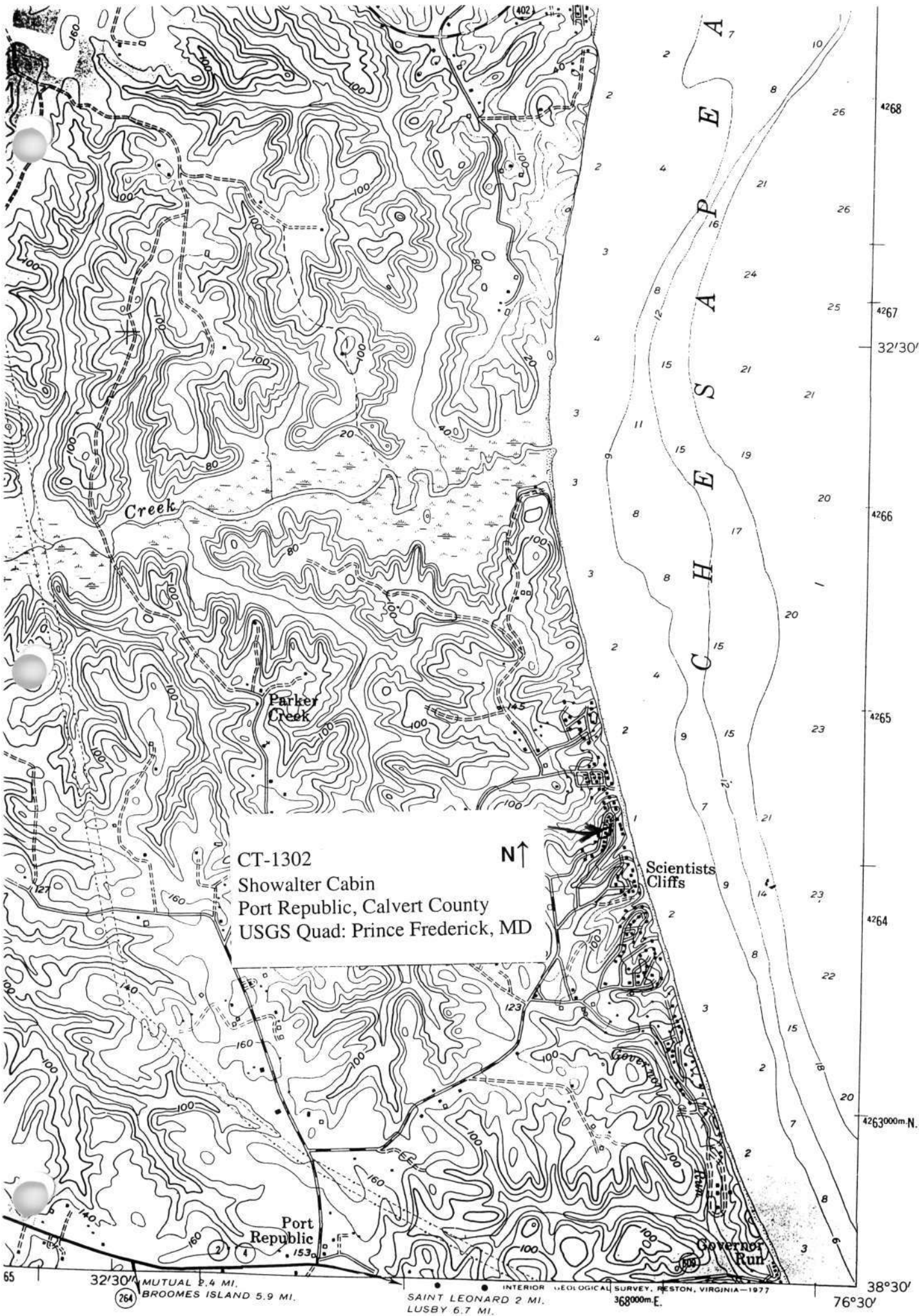
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



CT-1302
SHOWALTER CABIN
PORT REPOBUC, CALVERT COUNTY

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP
NOT TO SCALE



CT-1302
Showalter Cabin
Port Republic, Calvert County
USGS Quad: Prince Frederick, MD

Scientists
Cliffs

Port
Republic

Governor
Run

65 32°30' 264 MUTUAL 2.4 MI. BROOKES ISLAND 5.9 MI. 368000m E. 38°30' 76°30' 4263000m N. 4264 4265 4266 4267 4268



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 4 0036

006

CT-1302

SHOWALTER CABIN

CALWDET, MD

CALDS, CHRISTOPHER

11/2002

NEGATIVE MD SHPO

EAST FACADE

1 OF 5

66528



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 2 0036

007

CT-1302
SHOWALTER CABIN
CAWLEY, MD
CALEB CHRISTOPHER
11/2002
NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

SOUTH ELEVATION

2 OF 5

66529



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 7 0036

004

CT-1302

SHAWARDE CUBIN

CALVERT, MD

CALB CHRISTOPHER

11/2002

NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

WEST ELEVATION

3 of 5

66526



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 1 0036

005

CT-1302

SHOWALTER CARIN

CAWERT, MD

CAWERT CHRISTHER

11/2002

NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

NORTH ELEVATION

4 OF 5

66527



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 9 0036

009

CT-1302
SHOWALTER CABIN
CALVERT, MD
CALVERT CHRISTOPHER
11/2002

NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

VIEW OF CHESAPEAKE
BAY FROM SITE

66531 5 of 5